

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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R 292127Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1651

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5081

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PQ, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMA REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

HIGHLIGHTS OF 389TH PANAMA REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
AUGUST 28 AT PAN CANAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING:

1. LOCAL SITUATION: AMBASSADOR JORDEN STATED THAT
EMBASSY HAD NOT RECEIVED GOP REPLY TO STRONG NOTE PRO-
TESTING AUG. 14 DEMONSTRATION AT EMBASSY. HE ASSUMED
PANAMANIAN HAVING DIFFICULTY EXPLAINING PASSIVE ATTITUDE
OF NATIONAL GUARD DURING IBCK THROWING. HE REPORTED
THAT APPROXIMATE COST OF REPAIRS TO CHANCERY AMOUNTED
TO \$3,500. AMBASSADOR ALSO DESCRIBED BRIEFLY STATUS
OF GOP-UNITED BRANDS NEGOTIATIONS OF BANANA TAX DISPUTE.
HE REPORTED THAT MR. GABRIEL LEWIS APPARENTLY HAD RE-
PLACED MINISTER MANFREDO AS PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATOR AND
ADRESSED OPINION THIS WAS ENCOURAGING SIGN BECAUSE
OF MR. LEWIS' EXPERIENCE, BACKGROUND, AND CLOSE TIES
TO GENERAL TORRIJOS. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT UNITED
BRANDS VICE PRESIDENT TAYLOR WAS BACK IN PANAMA AND
THAT THE COMPANY WAS PREPARED TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CON-
CESSIONS IN ORDER TO RESUME PRODUCTION AND CONTINUE TALKS
ON EVENTUAL SALE OF PLANTATIONS TO GOP.

2. CONTINGENCY PLAN: AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT REPRE-
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SENTATIVES OF PRC PRINCIPALS WERE MEETING THAT AFTERNOON

TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN CONTINGENCY PLAN. HE REITERATED HIS HOPE THAT PLAN COULD BE APPROVED AND SUBMITTED TO WASHINGTON. THE CINC STATED HE HAD CAREFULLY REVIEWED PLAN AND WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT IT WITH MONOR CHANGES WHICH WERE MOSTLY EDITORIAL.

3. OPENING OF C-15 ROAD: GOVERNOR PARKER INQUIRED WHETHER PRESIDENT LAKAS HAD RESPONDED TO AMBASSADOR'S INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SEPTEMBER 6 INAUGURATION CEREMONIES OF C-15 ROAD. HE EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR NOT INVITING PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS IF PRESIDENT IS UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE. THE CINC SUGGESTED THAT IF PRESIDENT DOES NOT ATTEND, CEREMONY COULD STILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN ZONE. SUCH CEREMONY WOULD SERVE TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO CONTRACTORS AND OTHER PERSONS HAVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD SEEK EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO ASK PRESIDENT LAKAS IF HE WILL ATTEND.

4. SQUATTER PROBLEM: GOVERNOR REPORTED THAT DESPITE RECENT ALLEGED REMOVAL OF SQUATTERS BY NATIONAL GUARD (PANAMA 4831), PAN CANAL OFFICIALS WERE UNABLE TO SEE ANY CHANGE IN SITUATION. IN FACT, TWO NEW HOUSES HAD BEEN OBSERVED. THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS APPARENTLY TALKED TO SQUATTERS BUT HAS NOT REMOVED THEM.

5. WHISKEY PRICES: GOVERNOR INQUIRED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY RECENT COMMUNICATIONS OR DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING ARMY SECRETARY'S LETTER TO USARSO ON PROBLEM OF HIGH PRICES OF ALIOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPORTED INTO CANAL ZONE. AMBASSADOR STATED HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

6. CUBA: GOVERNOR REPORTED PAN CANAL WAS LOOKING INTO POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF RECENT GOP RECOGNITION OF CUBA. PAN CANAL AT PRESENT CAN OFFER SHIP'S STORES SERVICES TO CUBAN VESSELS BUT UNDER COMMERCE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS CANNOT BUNKER OR LOAD OR UNLOAD CARGO. PAN CANAL IS ALSO ASSESSING POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS AFFECTING CANAL OPERATIONS. CUBAN VESSELS FALL UNDER SPECIAL CLASSIFIED SECURITY INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY CONFIDENTIAL

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SECRETARY OF ARMY WHICH ARE COORDINATED IN WASHINGTON FOR FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS. HE ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS THAT EMBAYRE BE FURNISHED COPY OF THESE SECURITY REGULATIONS. IN CONNECTION WITH REPORT THAT TOCUMEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MIGHT BE CLOSED DOWN NECESSITATING USE OF HWARD AIR FORCE BASE AS ALTERNATE LANDING SITE, CINC COMMENTED THAT THIS APPEARS UNLIKELY AT PRESENT. SECURITY REGULATIONS PRECLUDE CUBAN AND OTHER BLOC AIR-

CRAFT ACCESS TO HOWARD AFB EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCY LANDINGS.

7. SEARCH AND RESCUE: THE CINC REPORTED THAT THE SOUTHCOM SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED BY THE EXPECTED REMOVAL LATER THIS FISCAL YEAR OF THREE USAF HH-3 HELICOPTERS. HE STATED THAT THE RESCUE COORDINATING CENTER WOULD BE MAINTAINED, HOWEVER, AND WOULD HAVE USAF TWIN HUEYS AND ARMY SINGLE ENGINE HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS. IN REPLY TO QUESTION FROM AMBASSADOR, CINC ESTIMATED THAT EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS WOULD NOT BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY REMOVAL OF HEAVY LIFT HELICOPTERS.

8. CINC MEETING WITH TORRIJOS: CINC REPORTED GENERAL TORRIJOS HAD REQUESTED CINC MEET WITH HIM. SUBJECT MATTER HAD NOT BEEN MENTIONED AND CINC WANTED AMBASSADOR'S CONCURRENCE WITH SUCH MEETING AND ASKED IF HE WISHED BE PRESENT OR BE REPRESENTED BY CHIEF, MILGP. AMBASSADOR SAID CINC SHOULD ATTEND AND SPECULATED DEFENSE CONCEPT INTRODUCED DURING LAST CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATING SESSION COULD BE ONE SUBJECT TORRIJOS WISHED DISCUSS.
JORDEN

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